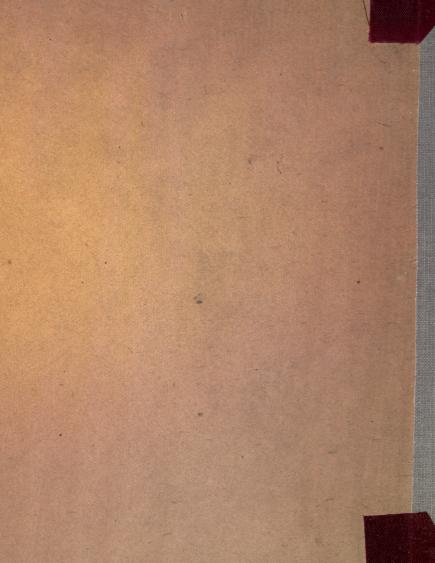
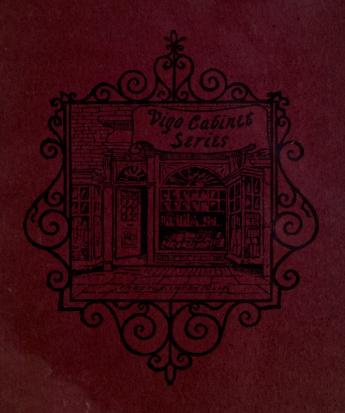


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1907

THE BRIDGE OF FURE

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JACK BEAZLEY

Poetae tenero, meo sodali

GENTLE Poet, only friend, Lover of the stars and sun, Since our days are at an end, Since the older days are done; Since it seems that nevermore May I hope to trail my gown Rapturously, as before, With my friend in Oxford Town; Since I so regret a time So unprofitably spent, Let me send a little rhyme From a king in banishment,-Send a wish that we may see Better days, and braver days:-Floreas, amice mi! Floreat Praxiteles.

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A New Year's Carol

AWAKE, awake! The world is young, For all its weary years of thought: The starkest fights must still be fought, The most surprising songs be sung.

And those who have no other Gods May still behold, if they bestir, The windy amphitheatre Where dawn the timeless periods.

Then hear the shouting-voice of men Magniloquently rise and ring:
Their flashing eyes and measured swing Prove that the world is young again.

I was beyond the hills, and heard That old and fervent Goddess call, Whose voice is like a waterfall, And sweeter than the singing-bird.

O stubborn arms of rosy youth, Break down your other Gods, and turn To where her dauntless eyeballs burn,— The silent pools of Light and Truth.

Rioupéroux

- High and solemn mountains guard Rioupéroux,—
- Small untidy village where the river drives a
- Frail as wood-anemones, white and frail were you,
- And drooping a little like the slender daffodil.
- Oh I will go to France again, and tramp the valley through,
- And I will change these gentle clothes for clog and corduroy,
- And work with the mill-hands of black Rioupéroux,
- And walk with you and talk with you like any other boy.

III

The Ballad of the Student in the South

It was no sooner than this morn
That first I found you there,
Up to your breast in Southern corn
As golden as your hair.

I had read books you had not read, Yet was I put to shame To hear the simple words you said, That shuddered like a flame.

Shall I forget, when prying dawn Sends me about my way, The careless stars, the quiet lawn, And you with whom I lay?

Darling, a Scholar's fancies sink
All faint beneath your song:
And you are right: why should we think,
We who are young and strong?

We're of the people, you and I,
We do what others do,
Linger and toil, and laugh and die,
And love the whole night through.

Mignon

Knowst thou the land where bloom the Lemontrees,

And darkly gleam the golden oranges?
A gentle wind blows down from that blue sky;
Calm stands the Myrtle and the Laurel high.
Hast thou been there? Away, away!
O Father, let us seek that land some day.

Knowst thou the House, that gloriously glows With shining rooms and pillared porticoes. The marble statues stand and look at me: Alas, poor child, what hath been done to thee? Hast thou been there? Away, away! Together let us go, brave friend, some day!

Knowstthou the Mountain with its crown of cloud? The mule plods warily; the white mists shroud; Coiled in their caves the ancient Dragons dream: Down leaps the rock, and over it the stream. Hast thou been there? Away, away! There lies our path. O Father, come to-day!

(From Goethe.)

 \mathbf{v}

Dorothy

DOROTHY, open your sweet eyes, Give me your mouth to kiss: Tell me how women get so wise, And what their secret is.

Yours is the beauty of the moon,
The wisdom of the sea,
Since first you tasted, sweet and soon,
Of God's forbidden tree.

VI

From Grenoble

Now have I seen, in Graisivaudan's vale,
The fruits that dangle and the vines that trail,
The poplars standing up in bright blue air,
The silver turmoil of the broad Isère
And sheer pale cliffs that wait through Earth's
long noon

Till the round Sun be colder than the Moon.

Mine be the ancient song of Travellers:

I hate this glittering land where nothing stirs:

I would go back, for I would see again

Mountains less vast, a less abundant plain,

The Northern Cliffs clean-swept with driven foam,

And the rose-garden of my gracious home.

VII

Hialmar speaks to the Raven

Night on the bloodstained snow: the wind is chill;

And there a thousand tombless warriors lie, Grasping their swords, wild-featured: all are still:

Above them the black ravens wheel and cry.

A brilliant moon sends her cold light abroad: Hialmar arises from the reddened slain, Leaning heavily on his shattered sword, And bleeding from his side the battle-rain.

"Hail to you all: is there one breath still drawn Among those fierce and fearless lads that played So merrily, and sang as sweet in the dawn As thrushes singing in the bramble shade?

HIALMAR SPEAKS TO THE RAVEN

"They have no word to say: my helm's unbound, My breastplate by the axe unriveted: Blood's on my eyes; I hear a spreading sound Like waves or wolves that clamour in my head.

"Eater of men, old raven, come this way, And with thine iron bill open my breast: To-morrow find us as we are to-day, And bear my heart to her that I love best.

"Through Upsála, where drink the Jarls and sing,

And clash their golden bowls in company, Bird of the moor, carry with tireless wing To Ylmer's daughter there the heart of me.

"And thou shalt see her standing, straight and pale,

High-pedestalled on some rook-haunted tower: She has two earrings wrought of silver scale, And eyes like stars that shine in twilight hour.

HIALMAR SPEAKS TO THE RAVEN

"Tell her my love, thou dark bird ominous; Give her my heart, no bloodless heart and vile, But red, compact and strong, O raven. Thus Shall Ylmer's daughter greet thee with a smile.

"Now let my life from twenty deep wounds flow, And wolves may drink the blood. My time is done.

Young, brave and spotless, laughing-free I go To sit where all the Gods are, in the sun."

"Le coeur de Hialmar" Leconte de Lisle.

VIII

We that were friends to-night have found A sudden fear, a secret flame: I am on fire with the soft sound You make, in uttering my name.

Forgive a young and boastful man
Whom dreams delight and passions please,
And love me as great women can,
Who have no children at their knees.

IX

Pervigilium

REIGN, thou marble Venus, reign!
We are tired of painted Marys.
Thou shalt stir thyself again,
And be queen of our vagaries.
Men no more shall worship pain
When they taste how brave the air is,
When they herald thee with laughter, and with roses entertain.

When thy lilies bloom once more,
When thy bosomed rosebuds waken,
Love shall be our only lore,
Cares and creeds be all forsaken;
And we'll wander by the shore,
Up among the forest bracken,
Decked with leaf and crowned with branches,—
children as we were before.

PERVIGILIUM

When the world returns to Spring,
In the commonwealth of races
Every Poet shall be King
With a court of happy faces:
Maidens in a rosy ring
Shall be lavish of embraces;
Every night shall throb with music: all the reeling world shall sing.

I must dream no more to-day:
Children, home! we cannot sever
Pain and Grief and Death whose sway
Stands unalterable ever.
Though you roam the woods alway,
Vain is love, and vain endeavour.
Sorrow breathes among the woodland; whispers
break upon our play.

I have sung all Love's great songs,
And have no new song to sing,
But I'll sing the old songs again,
With their burden of rights and wrongs,
And conventional sad refrain,—
O, sweet Love's home-coming!

I will praise the arms of my Love, And her tender body's swing, And her eyes, and her lips and breath: I will call to the powers above, And to tunnelling powers beneath,— O sweet Love's home-coming!

Thus did we, and always will,
While centuries crowd on the wing,
And drive us along to our doom,
When the globes shall be ground in the Mill
And lovers shall leap from the tomb,—
O, sweet Love's home-coming!

XI

On Turner's Polyphemus

Painter of day, let my dark spirit fly
Past the Trinacrian Sound, to gaze upon
The deathless horses of Hyperion
Driven up fiery stairs tumultuously:
To see once more the Achaian prows glide by,
Odysseus in his burnished galleon,
Nereides that sing him swiftly on,
And baffled Cyclops fading in the sky.

Master, you paint the passion of the Earth,
The faint victorious music of her birth,
The splendour of things lost and things grown
old;

And show us song new-wrought with ardent might

Of strong-winged morning and of sure delight, Of hyacinthine mist, and shining gold.

XII

To Francis Thompson

With a grey rush of tremulous angel-wings
And pealings of the white-robed orchestra
Wherein ethereal souls were playing a
Concerto of divine imaginings:
With freshness born anew from old-time Springs,
With Summer's flash and Winter's purity,
With Autumn's gentleness he came to me,
And whispered words of visionary things.
Till shafts of dim desire pierced me through,
Till shadows came and went before my eyes,
And my raised glance beheld in deep review
The legionary splendour of the skies.
Which vision past singing I went my way

Which vision past, singing I went my way And tread the dusty roads of Earth to-day.

XIII

The Ballad of Hampstead Heath

From Heaven's gate to Hampstead Heath Young Bacchus and his crew Came tumbling down, and o'er the town Their bursting trumpets blew.

The silver night was wildly bright,
And madly shone the moon,
To hear a song so clear and strong,
With such a levely type

With such a lovely tune.

From London's houses, huts, and flats
Came busmen, snobs, and Earls,
And ugly men in bowler hats
With charming little girls.

Sir Moses came, with eyes of flame,
Judd, who is like a bloater,
The brave Lord Mayor, in coach and pair,
King Edward, in his motor.

Far in a rosy mist withdrawn
The God, and all his crew,
Silenus pulled by nymphs, a faun,
A satyr drenched in dew,

THE BALLAD OF HAMPSTEAD HEATH

Smiled as they wept those shining tears
Only Immortals know,
Whose feet are set among the stars,
Above the shifting snow.

And one spake out into the night Before they left for ever,

"Rejoice, rejoice!" and his great voice Rolled like a splendid river.

He spoke in Greek, which Britons speak Seldom, and circumspectly;

But Mr. Judd, that man of mud, Translated it correctly.

And when they heard that happy word Policemen leapt and ambled:

The busmen pranced, the maidens danced, The men in bowlers gambolled.

An Echo walked the town till late,
And found the long streets lonely:

At last she found a small brass plate Inscribed For Members Only.

And so she went to Parliament;
But those ungainly men
Woke up from sleep, and turned about,
And fell asleep again.

XIV

Ideal

WHEN all my gentle friends had gone I wandered in the night alone: Beneath the green electric glare I saw men pass with hearts of stone; Yet still I heard them everywhere, The golden voices of the air: "Friend, we will go to hell with thee, Thy griefs, thy glories we will share, And rule the land and shake the sea And set a thousand devils free :-" "What dost thou, Stranger, at my side, Thou gaunt old man accosting me? Away, this is my night of pride! On Satan's horses I will ride, And I will seek delightful things." The old man answered: "Woe betide!"

IDEAL

Said I, "The world is made for Kings: To him who works and working sings Come joy and majesty and power And steadfast love with royal wings." "O watch these fools that blink and cower," Said that wise man: "and every hour A score is born, a dozen dies." Said I: "In London fades the flower But far away the bright blue skies Shall watch my solemn walls arise, And all the glory, all the grace Of earth shall gather there, and eves Will shine like stars in that new place." Said he: "Indeed of ancient race Thou comest, with thy hollow scheme: And quiet tears of men shall stream For thee, O Architect of Dream. Where are the islands of the blest? And where Atlantis, where Theleme?"

XV

Arthur Rackham's Rip Van Winkle

Since youth is wise, and cannot comprehend Proportion, nor behold things as they are, Φιλοθεάμονες we'll be, my friend, And laugh at what appears quadrangular, Our only Gods shall be the Subterrane, Pictures of things misshapen, harsh and crude, The flattened Face outside the window-pane, The little Squeak behind us in the wood. Here, friend, are subtly drawn uncommon things:

Make such your Gods: they only understand.
Only a Headless Wag with slimy wings
Can stop your toothache and the Dentist's hand.
Though after twenty years they may not please,
Sane men have worshipped stranger Gods than
these.

XVI

Mary Magdalen

O EYES that strip the souls of men!
There came to me the Magdalen.
Her blue robe with a cord was bound,
Her hair with Lenten lilies crowned.
"Arise," she said, "God calls for thee:
Turned to new paths thy feet must be.
Leave the fever and the feast,
Leave the friends thou lovest best.
For thou must walk in barefoot ways
To give my dear Lord Jesus praise."

Then answered I—"Sweet Magdalen, God's servant, once beloved of men, Why didst thou change old ways for new, Thy trailing red for corded blue, Roses for lilies on thy brow, Rich splendour for a barren vow?"

MARY MAGDALEN

Gentle of speech she answered me:—
"Sir, I was sick with revelry.
True, I have scarred the night with sin,
A pale and tawdry heroine;
But once I heard a voice that said
'Who lives in sin is surely dead,
But whoso turns to follow Me
Hath joy and immortality.'"

"O Mary, not for this," I cried,
"Didst thou renounce thy scented pride.
Not for a prize of endless years,
Or barren joy apart from tears
Didst thou desert the courts of men.
Tell me thy truth, sweet Magdalen!"

She trembled, and her eyes grew dim:—
"For love of Him, for love of Him."

XVII

I ROSE from dreamless hours and sought the

That beat upon my window: from the sill

I watched sweet lands where Autumn light newborn

Swayed through the trees and lingered on the hill.

If things so lovely are, why labour still
To dream of something more than this I see?
Do I remember tales of Galilee,
I who have slain my faith and freed my will?
Let me forget dead faith, dead mystery,
Dead thoughts of things I cannot comprehend.
Enough the light mysterious in the tree,
Enough the faithful friendship of my friend.

XVIII

The Bridge of Fire

I

Past the bright door of Heaven whose golden bars

Exclude the interchange of Night and Day, Crowned with soft light, attired with shining stars,

Dwell the great Gods in durable array.
In all that land no frost, no fever mars
Their timeless periods of pomp and play:
Some drive about the Rim in painted cars,
And others drink eternity away.

The trumpet of their pride
Proclaims them glorified
In chronicles of unremembered sway;
And lady Goddesses
Surround with sweet caress

Their ivied paramours. "O rest!" they say:
"Here at our gentle bosoms lie,

And watch the sun and moon and world and years roll by!"

II

Hear now the song of those bright shapes that shine

Huge as Leviathans, tasting the fare
Delicate-sweet, while scented dews divine
Thrill from the ground and clasp the rosy air.—
"Sing on, sing out, and reach a hand for wine!
For the drunken Earth spins softly afloat
down there.

And the stars burn low, and the sky is sapphirine,

And the little winds of Space are in our hair!

The little winds of Space

Blow in the Love-god's face,

The only God that lacks not praise and prayer;
Who sole preserves his power
While dynasties devour

Temples and shrines and stones without repair. Still he goes forth as strong as ten,

A red immortal riding in the hearts of men!"

III

The Gods whose names are sunrise and delight For him who loves the leafy ways of song,-The Gods of Hellas have escaped the night To walk above the stars, a royal throng,— Zeus and Poseidon and the Boy most bright, The twain to whom the sceptred shades belong, Majestical Princesses famed in fight, And Aphrodite sweet to charm the strong: And younger Gods than these That peep among the trees, And dance when Dionysus beats his gong: And old disastrous Gods That nod with snaky nods,— Allecto swift to strike with dripping throng: Itself the dull profound of Hell Spits reeling Typhon forth that in the dark did dwell.

IV

Shadows there are that seem to look for home, Each one a gloom upon the stellar plain, Voiced like a great bell swinging in a dome, Appealing mightily for realms to reign.

One said—"These are the shapeless Gods of Rome,

The tired-out Gods of labour, sweat and pain:
These watched the peasant turn his sullen loam,

These dragged him forth to fight and strive again,—

Saturnus white and old,
Who lost the age of gold,
Mars and Minerva standing on the slain,
Pomona from whose womb
The fruits in season come,
And she who gathers in the mellow grain,
And ghouls of the revengeful dead,

Larvae and Lemures that clamour to be fed."

v

Belus and Ra and that most jealous Lord

Who rolled the hosts of Pharaoh in the sea, Giants and Trolls, in every hand a sword, Gnomes and Dwarfs and the Spectral Company, Gods that take vengeance, Gods that grant reward. Gods that exact a murdered devotee. Buddha the Wise, and Siva the Abhorred, And Norns that tend Ygdrasil, fatal tree, And Isis of the Moon Who kept the stars in tune, With her mad Phrygian sister, Cybele, And Mithras swift to save The faithful and the brave. And Allah rumbling on to victory,— Behold! and oldest of them all. Square heads that leer and lust, and lizard

shapes that crawl.

VI

The astral light grows dim upon the dales,
As he who loved the sinner and the child,
Before whose beauty still the tyrant quails
Comes by alone, a quiet man and mild.
The voice of all reproach is fixed and fails;
The heart is willing to be reconciled.
Was it his work, the groaning in the jails?
When bodies writhed and wept, could he have
smiled?

Be strong, undaunted soul, To break the aureole:

Release our chain, but leave him unreviled.

Though sweet the lily blows

The fire upon the rose

Alone shall guide thee on the bitter wild, At last to find no Lotus land,

But one where Truth may touch thee dying with sweet hand.

VII

Between the pedestals of Night and Morning,
Between red Death and radiant Desire,
With clamour of delight and doubt and warning
The High Gods stand upon the Bridge of Fire.
O Soul, lay down thy pride, and cease adorning
Thy brows with laurel or with gold thy lyre!
The wheels of Time are turning, turning,
turning;

The slow Stream waits for thee, the stagnant Mire.

The Dreamer and his Dream
Shall struggle in the Stream
Sunless and unredeemable for ever,
Since this the Gods command,
That he who leaves their land
Shall travel down to that relentless River.

"O Master of the World," I cry,
"Save me from fear of Death: I dare not die."

XIX

Narcissus

O THOU with whom I dallied Through all the hours of noon,-Sweet water-boy, more pallid Than any watery moon; Above thy body turning White lily-buds were strewn: Alas, the silver morning, Alas, the golden noon! Alas, the clouds of sorrow, The waters of despair! I sought thee on the morrow, And never found thee there. Since first I saw thee splendid, Since last I called thee fair, My happy ways have ended By waters of despair. The pool that was thy dwelling I hardly knew again, So black it was, and swelling With bitter wind and rain.

NARCISSUS

Amid the reeds I lingered Between desire and pain Till evening, rosy-fingered, Beckoned to night again.

Yet once when sudden quiet
Had visited the skies,
And stilled the stormy riot,
I looked upon thine eyes.
I saw they wept and trembled
With glittering mysteries,
But yellow clouds assembled
Redarkening the skies.

O listless thou art lying
In waters cool and sweet,
While I, dumb brother, dying,
Faint in the desert heat.
Though thou dost love another,
Still let my lips entreat:
Men call me fair, O brother,
And women honey-sweet.

XX

The Golden Head

Had I the power
To Midas given of old
To touch a flower,
And leave the petals gold,
I then might touch thy face,
Delightful Maid,
And leave a metal grace,
A graven head.

Thus would I slay—
Ah, desperate device!
The vital day
That trembles in thine eyes,
And let the red lips close
That sang so well,
And drive away the rose,
To leave a shell.

THE GOLDEN HEAD

Then I myself,
Rising austere and dumb,
On the high shelf
Of my half-lighted room
Would place the shining bust,
And wait alone,
Until I was but dust,
Buried unknown.

Thus, in my love
For nations yet unborn,
I would remove
From our two lives the morn,
And muse on old speeches
In mine armchair,
Content, should Time confess
How sweet you were.

XXI

Litany to Satan

(From Baudelaire.)

O GRANDEST of the Angels, and most wise, O fallen God, fate-driven from the skies, Satan, at last take pity on our pain!

O first of exiles who endurest wrong, Who growest in thy hatred still more strong Satan, at last take pity on our pain!

O subterranean King, omniscient, Healer of Man's immortal discontent! Satan, at last take pity on our pain!

To lepers and to outcasts thou dost show How passion makes Man's Paradise below. Satan, at last take pity on our pain!

LITANY TO SATAN

Thou by thy Mistress Death hast given to man Hope, the imperishable courtesan. Satan, at last take pity on our pain!

Thou givest to the Guilty their calm mien
That damns the crowd around the guillotine.
Satan, at last take pity on our pain!

Thou knowest those corners of the jealous Earth Where God has hidden jewels of great worth. Satan, at last take pity on our pain!

Thou dost discover by mysterious signs Where sleep the buried people of the mines. Satan, at last take pity on our pain!

Thou stretchest forth a saving hand to keep Such men as roam upon the roofs in sleep. Satan, at last take pity on our pain!

Thy power can make the halting Drunkards' feet

Avoid the peril of the surging street. Satan, at last take pity on our pain!

LITANY TO SATAN

Thou to console our helplessness, didst plot The cunning use of powder and of shot. Satan, at last take pity on our pain!

Thy awful name is written as with pitch On the unrelenting foreheads of the rich: Satan, at last take pity on our pain!

In strange and hidden places thou dost move Where passions welter in unhallowed love. Satan, at last take pity on our pain!

Father of those whom God's tempestuous ire Has flung from Paradise with sword and fire, Satan, at last take pity on our pain!

PRAYER

Satan, to thee be praise upon the height Where thou wast King of old, and in the night Of Hell, where thou dost dream on silently. Grant that one day beneath the knowledge tree, When it bursts forth to grace thy royal brow, My soul may sit, that cries upon thee now.

XXII

WHILE I translated Baudelaire
Children were playing out in the air.
Turning to watch, I saw the light
That made their clothes and faces bright.
I heard the tune they tried to sing,
As they kept dancing in a ring;
But I could not forget my book,
And thought of men whose faces shook
When babies passed them with a look.

They are as terrible as death,
Those children in the road beneath.
Their witless chatter is more dread
Than voices in a madman's head:
Their dance more awful and inspired,
Because they are not ever tired,
Than silent revel with soft sound
Of pipes, on consecrated ground,
When all the ghosts go round and round.

IIIXX

Prayer

LET me not know how sins and sorrows glide Along the sober city of our rage, Or why the sons of men are heavy-eyed.

Let me not know, except from printed page, The pain of bitter Love, of baffled Pride, Or Sickness shadowing with a long presage.

Let me not know, since happy some have died Quickly in youth or quietly in age How faint, how loud, the bravest hearts have cried.

XXIV

Tenebris Interlucentem

Once a poor songbird that had lost her way Sang down in Hell upon a blackened bough, Till all the lazy ghosts remembered how The forest trees stood up against the day.

Then suddenly they knew that they had died, Hearing this music mock their shadow land: And some one there stole forth a timid hand To draw a phantom brother to his side.

XXV

Anapaests

Songs rolling a harmony deeper
Than waves on a boreal shore,
Than reboant winds upon seas,—
Battle-harmonies, rousing the sleeper
To war, from the dreaming of war,—
I weary of songs such as these.

Physicians that need not a physic,
Star-voices atune with the morn,
The poet upstanding and strong,
Make drunk with celestial music,
Drive mad with their musical scorn,
The men who go bitterly wrong.

49

D

ANAPAESTS

I hate the bright streams of perfection,
The words that are golden and wise,
Triumphantly noble in pain;
The Spirits in fierce insurrection,
But calm as the tent of the skies,—
I hate, for I cannot attain.

Songs breathed to the tremulous ditties
Of broken and harsh violins,
Songs hinting the rose and the vine,
Half drowned in the roar of red cities,
And youthfully pleased at their sins,
These songs I adore: they are mine.

XXVI

Destroyer of Ships, Men, Cities

To I. D.

Helen of Troy has sprung from Hell To claim her ancient throne: So we have bidden friends farewell To follow her alone.

The Lady of the laurelled brow,
The Queen of pride and power,
Looks rather like a spirit now,
And rather like a flower.

Dark in her eyes the lamp of night
Burns with a secret flame,
Where shadows pass that have no sight,
And ghosts that have no name.

DESTROYER OF SHIPS, MEN, CITIES

For mute is battle's brazen horn
That rang for Priest and King;
And she who drank of that brave morn
Is pale with evening.

An hour there is when bright words flow,
A little hour for sleep,
An hour between, when lights are low,
And then she seems to weep.

But no less lovely than of old
She shines, and almost hears
The horns that blew in days of gold,
The shouting charioteers.

And still she breaks the hearts of men,
Their hearts, and all their pride,
Doomed to be cruel once again,
And live dissatisfied.

XXVII

My Friend

I HAD a friend who battled for the Truth, With stubborn heart and obstinate despair, Till all his beauty left him, and his youth, And there were few that loved him anywhere.

Then would he wander out among the graves, And dream of dead men lying in a row; Or, standing on a cliff, observe the waves, And hear the wistful sound of winds below;

And yet they told him nothing. So he sought The twittering forest at the break of day, Or on fantastic mountains shaped a thought As lofty and impenitent as they.

MY FRIEND

And next he walked in wonder through the town,

Slowly by day and hurriedly by night, To watch the puppets dangling up and down With timorous and terrible delight.

Weary, he drew man's wisdom from a book, And pondered on the high words spoken of old, Pacing a lamplit room; but soon forsook The golden sentences that left him cold.

After, a maiden found him, and his head Lay on her breast, till he forgot his pain In gentle kisses on a midnight bed, And welcomed royal-winged Joy again.

When love became a loathing, as it must, He knew not where to turn; and he was wise, Being full of years, to mix himself with dust, To rest his rebel soul, and close his eyes.

XXVIII

Oxford Canal

- When you have wearied of the valiant spires of this County Town,
- Of its wide white streets and glistening museums,
- Of its red motors and lumbering trams and selfsufficient people,
- I will take you walking with me to a place you have not yet seen—
- Half town and half country—the lonely land of the Canal.
- It is dearer to me than the antique town: I love it more than the rounded hills:
- There is no river so straight or so unearthly as the long Canal.
- No gloomy forest, no mysterious glen is so full of fear as that long line of sickly willows:
- In forests and glens you may find unpleasant beasts and irregular demons,

OXFORD CANAL

- But all through the autumn nights the souls of the lost pass through the willow-trees.
- I have observed great storms and trembled: I have wept in the dark for fear,
- But nothing makes me so afraid as the clear water of that empty Canal at noon.
- Do you see the great telegraph poles down in the water—how every wire is distinct?
- If a body fell into the Canal it would rest entangled in those wires for ever, between earth and heaven:
- For the water is as deep as the sky itself.
- One day I was foolishly wondering how if a man fell off that lofty pole,
- He would rush through the water towards me till the images were scattered by his splash,
- When suddenly a train rushed by: the brazen dome of the engine flashed: the long white carriages roared;
- The sun veiled himself for a moment, and the signals loomed in fog;

OXFORD CANAL

- A savage woman screamed at me from a barge: little children began to cry;
- The untidy, unfinished land began to move: a saw-mill started;
- A cart rattled down to the wharf, and workmen clanged over the iron foot-bridge;
- A beautiful old man nodded from the first-story window of a square red house,
- And a pretty girl came out to hang up clothes in a small delightful garden.
- O strange motion in the suburb of a County Town: slow, regular movement of the dance of death!
- No phantoms move in the light: more terrible than phantoms, they are men.
- Theirs is no romance of great cities, or stupendous crimes; nor do they live on wild poetic moors.

Forgotten they live, and forgotten die.

XXIX

The Old Poet

Now fails the fire: my heart is numb with pain:

I am reminded in too many ways Of voices I shall never hear again, Of happier days.

O not another poem will I write:
I will forget the books that I have read:
I will step out reluctant through the night,
Veiling my head.

For grief like mine no tragic peals of woe Thunder: I am too cursed with abject fear To stand in daylight. Of my poems know This one sincere.

XXX

The Young Poet

Ir there be any grief
For those lost eremites
That live in lonely tombs,
It is on Autumn nights,
At falling of the leaf;
It is when pale October,
Relentless tree-disrober,
Invades the silent homes.

But him no Autumn's chill
Shall have the power to harm:
Predominant, his lyre
Shall keep remembrance warm
And leave him lovely still:
And spirits softly winging
Shall listen to his singing,
And weep for his desire.

THE YOUNG POET

He loved and sang and sinned With roses on his brow.
Alas for all his pride!
His eyes are eaten now,
He's lighter than the wind.
The veil of Love is riven,
The Sin by Death forgiven,
The Singer glorified.

Autumn has killed the rose:
O mock him not with flowers:
Set up no shapely stone!
Take him to pass the hours
Where the grey nettle grows.
With scant and scarce adorning
Let him who praised the morning
Lie here, alone, unknown!

XXXI

The First Sonnet of Bathrolaire

Over the moonless land of Bathrolaire
Rises at night, when revelry begins,
A white unreal orb, a Sun that spins,
And watches with a faint metallic stare
The madly moving dance that they dance there,
Whilst din and drone of ghostly violins
Drown the triumphant shriek of obscene sins,
And raise the incantation of despair.
And all the spaces of that midnight Town
Sound with appeal and sorrowful abuse.
There some most lonely are: some try to crown
Mad lovers with sad boughs of formal yews,
And Titan women wandering up and down
Lead on the pale fanatics of the Muse.

XXXII

The Second Sonnet of Bathrolaire

Now the sweet Dawn on brighter fields afar
Has walked among the daisies, or has breathed
The glory of the mountain winds, and sheathed
The stubborn sword of Night's last-shining star.
In Bathrolaire, when Day's old doors unbar
The motley mask, fantastically wreathed
Pass through a strong portcullis, brazen-teethed,
And enter glowing mines of cinnabar.
Stupendous prisons shut them out from day,
Gratings and caves and rayless catacombs,
And the unrelenting rack and tourniquet
Grind death in cells where jetting gaslight
gloams,

And iron ladders stretching far away
Dive to the depths of those eternal Domes.

XXXIII

I AM afraid to think about my death,
When it shall be, and whether in great pain
I shall rise up and battle for my breath,
Or calmly wait the bursting of my brain.

I am no coward who should seek in fear A folklore solace or sweet Indian tales:

I know dead men are deaf and cannot hear The singing of a thousand nightingales.

I know dead men are blind, and cannot see
The friend that shuts in horror their big eyes,
And they are witless—Oh, I'd rather be
A living mouse than dead in such a wise.

XXXIV

Envoy

The young men leap, and toss their golden hair, Run round the land, or sail across the seas:
But one was stricken with a sore disease,—
The lean and swarthy poet of despair.

Know me, the slave of fear and death and shame,

A sad Comedian, a most tragic Fool, Shallow, imperfect, fashioned without rule, The doubtful shadow of a demon flame.

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